

Prospective Customer study based on the Internet questionnaire survey, in case of Sanriku Geopark.

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The author carried out an Internet survey of prospective tourists visiting the Sanriku Geopark, conducted to understand their travel habits, impressions of the Sanriku coastal area, and motivations for travelling. Additionally, a principal component analysis (PCA) was performed using a multivariate analysis technique to examine their characteristics as tourists and images of travel destinations they would want to visit in the future. With regard to their travel habits, the respondents' answers indicate that they mostly go on 2-day family trips in a private vehicle, and in the majority of cases, their purpose behind travelling is "to feel refreshed" or "to eat delicious food." Based on this data, a PCA employing variance-covariance matrices revealed that tourists are basically seeking "extraordinary" and "healing" experiences from their travels. The principal component scores from the PCA were used and the average scores of each gender calculated. A t-test identified a trend of women seeking "healing" experiences more actively than men ($p < 0.10$) at a level of 0.1%. On the other hand, with regard to the tourists' impressions of the Sanriku coastal area, the results of the multivariate analysis suggested that prospective visitors tend to perceive the coastal area comprehensively in terms of both "nature and scenery" and "local area and culture" to the same degree as those who have previously visited the place. For the area to be resuscitated as a tourist destination, it is important to construct a regional brand and devise strategies that will lead to the region's rebirth as a top travel site. This can be achieved by offering higher quality experiences and services without destroying the traditional image of the Sanriku coast.